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VANQUISHING  
VICKSBURG.

The Campaign which Ended in the Surrender of America's Gibraltar.

CLOSE UNDER THE WALLS.

A Garden which Produced Many Singular Things.

FIRST BLOODY CHARGE.

Repulsed, but the Troops Prepared for a Second Assault.

BY CHARLES A. HOBBS, A. M., FORMERLY FIRST SERGEANT, CO. B, 19TH ILL. Author of the Epic "Vicksburg," "The Ride in the Valley of Connaught," etc.

IX.

HERE it is! "What? The city?" "No! the fort!" and with eagerness we all looked forward where, upon a hill that stood more boldly out than its fellows, a yellow bank of earth attracted attention. It did not appear very dangerous, but its looks were deceptive, as we afterward discovered. We could not yet see the city, but having our view of the fortifications, we knew we should soon get a nearer position. Presently, we were thrown from our march in column into line of battle. And while up to this point we had followed the road and many injunctions to "close up," and had got on reasonably well, we soon found that the country, taken broadly, was broken by steep, long hills, and consequent hollows of great depth.

The country around Vicksburg was once—geologists tell us—an elevated plateau. But floods, through years of number uncounted, had cut the plain into chasms; some of them beds of ice that remained till our time; some of them that of smaller streams, and dry in the hot season. Generally their direction was southwest, the water—when there was any—emptying into the Mississippi. Much of this broken country had been heavily timbered. Vines and briars, long and tangled, were abundant, and in many places the timber had been felled in such a way that it impeded greatly the advance of the soldiers.

If you will think of great trees cut down and placed close together, ends pointing outward toward us, their boughs interlaced and sharpened, so that it would take a man a long time to get through and over, even if he were not encumbered with anything—the very sort of climbing through and over dangerous, because of the sharpened points—you will have one obstruction the army met in closing up against Vicksburg. It was very

TROUBLESOME ON THE PART OF THE REBELS—

I hesitate to say unfeeling, lest I be accused of strong language—to do this, for it kept us longer from making their acquaintance. Besides, these people took the occasion just when the soldier had all he could do to get through the obstruction anyhow, to shoot at him, which everybody knows has a tendency to excite a man and make him nervous. All this, however, did not prevent our effort to secure a closer acquaintance with the enemy.

That fort did not open some of its guns on us at once surprised us. Probably it waited a better range, which we were certainly going to afford it; for I suppose we must have been three miles away at the time. As we pushed forward in line of battle, we discovered that these hills were not smoothly steep. In their sides were great gulches, suddenly taking head and reaching perceptibly to the bottom, the



"FELL OUT OF THE TREE LIKE A DEAD SQUIRREL."

about descent varying from 15 to 30, and even 40 feet.

Often the top was hidden by tall briars or winding vines and were thus so entirely concealed that we knew of their existence only because someone of the line fell through to the bottom below. Of course this was dangerous business.

The line of battle halted a little while on a large white house which was effectively as our division hospital. Let me also tell you that we were closing in upon the foe in two lines of battle, and there were both waiting for some other movement to the right. Where any company stopped

was at the edge of a garden; the other line of battle was halted in the middle of it. The garden had been carefully cultivated. Not a weed was to be seen. A large part where we who struck this portion of the plantation were had been recently set out in cabbage plants.

So recent was this gardening, in the face, apparently, of our approach, that a suspicion entered the mind of some soldier about it. I do not know the name of this curious boy in blue, but he stuck his bayonet on his gun and proceeded vigorously to punch the ground with it where he stood. Others soon followed his example. Strange to say, ground so mellow seemed to have a hard substratum. The investigation proceeded more generally. Spades were called for. Where they came from I do not know—probably from the Pioneer Corps, which was near—but they were used energetically, and quicker than I have been telling this story they

UNEARTHED A SINGULAR TREASURE. Barrels! Broken open they proved to be full of meat of various kinds. That was acceptable and would soon be widely distributed. Barrels! More barrels. This time it was molasses, and though this would not be quite so easily managed, the soldiers felt equal to the task of disposing of the contents. All in good time, of course, when they got through with their investigations. Boxes! Great boxes! Broken open they showed a splendid variety and abundance of tableware. I don't know whether the men had formed a plan for the use of these or not, nor do I know whether the mine was yet exhausted or this fertile garden exhausted of its strange fruits, for just at this unpropitious moment came the order to advance. The entire crop, undistributed, had to be turned over to the next comer. And the turning over was very easy; we simply double-quickened away from it. I should even now like to know who got the stuff.

The next halt was in the front of the beautiful lawn of this large plantation. I should have been greatly pleased to rest here, under the immense trees that gave a grateful shade, and upon the green grass that grew so luxuriantly. At least I thought so. But just as the idea entered my head, there was a report from the fort, a little smoke curled upward, and Whush! whush! w-h-u-s-h! a solid shot, with apparently a dignified motion, a solid shot. How near was it coming? Would it reach our part of the line? We had hardly time to think this much, when here it was! There was no order to lie down, but if I maintain my



HIS LAST CUT OF COFFEE.

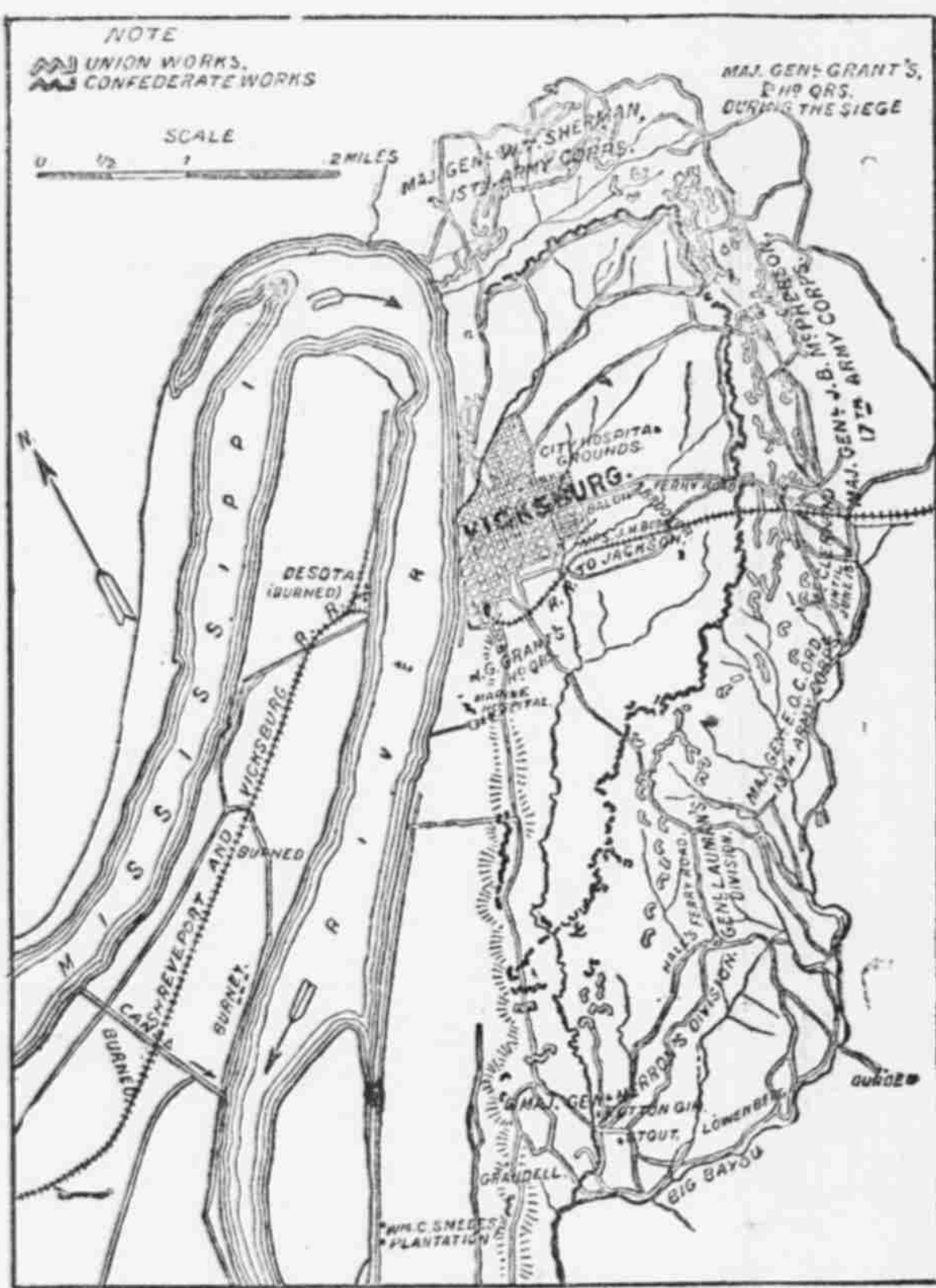
position of exact historian I will have to admit that some of us began the motion, and might have succeeded in reaching the recumbent position, had not the shot passed over us—at least 50 feet above our heads. It landed in a hillside a quarter of a mile away. Some of the boys afterward recovered the shot, or they claimed it as the one. If it had only been preserved, what a curiosity it would be to-day—this first rifle shot that greeted us from Vicksburg!

This showed us that we were in dangerous proximity to the foe. And our officers had no more consideration for us than to urge us forward, notwithstanding. It seems that, leaving to march so much farther, we of the Thirteenth Corps were rather behind than otherwise the corps upon the right. They did not have to go so far to strike the enemy. But we were up at last. It was not yet noon; I should say not later than 9:30 or 10 o'clock in the morning.

GRANT HAD ORDERED all lines pushed close to the enemy, and a charge at 2 o'clock on the main works, if things were favorable. But we had found the foe outside his works, and somewhat to our surprise, fighting with courage, and not yielding till he could no longer maintain his advanced position.

I suppose we had shared the feeling of the remainder of the army. We had beaten the troops before us, or some of them, so many times, that we thought we should easily beat them now; and if we could have followed them straight in from Big Black River, there seems no doubt that we should have been in possession of the city at once. For the demoralization of the army appeared complete. Such struggling and such hopelessness would have given an easy victory to Grant. It is stated that only three cannon were brought back to Vicksburg, of the more than 60 pieces with which Pemberton started. And the feeling in the city was one of despair. Rumors were afloat, so it is said, of Grant's near approach on that Sunday night and early morning of Monday, and it was the 19th before we appeared on this part of his line. Eight thousand fresh troops, that had shared none of the disasters of the field, were here, and the strong positions doubtless did much, with the fact that they could go no farther, to restore their courage.

And it was evident that Pemberton meant to stay in Vicksburg. Any faint hope we had that he would get out—and I am willing to admit that we should not have been sorry if he had—and leave us peaceable possession of the city, was withered in the



FORTIFICATIONS OF VICKSBURG.

very bad when we came closer to the fortifications.

Johnston had indeed on the 18th of May ordered him to evacuate the place if Hayne's Bluff could not be held. He wrote: "If therefore you are invested in Vicksburg you must ultimately surrender. Under such circumstances, instead of losing both troops and place, you must, if possible, save the troops. If it is not too late, evacuate Vicksburg and its dependencies and march to the northeast."

Pemberton CALLED A COUNCIL OF WAR, and they decided "that to withdraw from Vicksburg, with such morale and materiel, as to be of further service to the Confederacy would be impossible."

This was going on while Sherman, on the right, was in reality striking the rebel line on the Yazoo. The sound of his guns was heard while the deliberation was in progress. Of course it stopped further discussion, and Pemberton notified Johnston that he would hold the city, hoping for assistance from without to help him maintain his position and defeat the Federals. Whether he would have succeeded if he had at once assailed Sherman with all his army, 30,000 strong, we need not consider. He would have largely outnumbered that General at first. But he did not try, and so we found him waiting in the city. He still in reality had 30,000 men, an army almost as large as our own, with some 200 cannon; he had collected all the corn, driven in all the cattle and hogs in the country as far as Bayou, and why could he not stand a siege?

It seems from Bledau's account that Grant greatly underestimated Pemberton's forces at this time. He did not believe that General had got into the city with more than 15,000 effectives at the most. It was this, together with the prestige and spirit of previous victories, that caused him on this 19th of May to order a charge at 2 o'clock upon the works.

On our part of the line, advancing from the position already referred to, we were once more halted for a little time.

Here, watching carefully their opportunity, and stealing along ravines rather than moving over the hills, our detail, led behind to get and cook the company something to eat, came up. We were hungry by this time. We had had no breakfast, and some no supper.

Our men thus left behind had done well. They had found where the great turkey giblets and gobbled him; and turkey, and chicken, and wheat-flour rolls! Think of that! Rolls! They brought in in two large baskets somewhere discovered, and called us to the feast.

WERE WE WILLING TO GO?

If you had seen that start to make a rush to the baskets, not only of our company, but of the regiment, similarly favored, you would have entertained no doubt of our readiness.

This was a charge that we relished. A start, I say, was made. Alas! it was but a start. The stern command, "Fall in!" stopped it midway. We were definitely told that we were now to make the "closing-in" charge, and if possible go over the works.

We had already found the village filled with cane and willow, hard to get through, but till near the works these places were much sheltered from the fire of the enemy. However, the call to fall in, and the order to advance, dinnerless as well as breakfastless, sent us straight over the hill in front.

It was the old story of grape and canister, of shot and shell. We crossed the shoulder of a hill where it was bare and hard. The clay here—as it was everywhere around—when baked in the hot sun, made a surface that was solid, almost like brick. As we reached this place I remember how the grape-shot—a little larger than walnuts—struck the hard surface and bounced like a rubber ball, to strike yet again farther along. Upon my right a shell came screaming its way, to burst just back of our line, the pieces all scattering, happily, forward, so that none of us were hurt.

Thus it went, till the thunder of cannon echoed far and the nearer rush of the balls made dangerous music. The impetus of that dash took us over a goodly distance, but

did not take us up to the main works. We found the enemy outside his fortifications, and fighting with persistence. The first thing was to drive him from these outlying positions.

As we pushed him back the sound of rifle was added to that of the cannon. The whistle of the main canne with the rushing sweep of the solid shot or the crash of the bursting shell. Yet, I think at this time the grape-shot had a little more of a sizzling hiss and whirr about it than the others. The canister was multiplied minié-balls, and had no music that was attractive, but the grape-shot was large enough to make a sound that was emphasized hiss and shriek between the minié and the larger shot. I should like to hear from the old soldiers how they viewed these different missiles in their song of death.

ALL SORTS OF HINDING PLACES were sought by both sides, and various efforts made to deceive each the other. As we drew nearer the line of defense the ravines were more carefully guarded. Cannon to sweep these hollows and infantry to act as sharpshooters down their winding course we now found increasing. At first we had been comparatively safe when crossing some hill, we struck the ravine beyond. But now there were few places that the batteries of the enemy did not reach. At last we charged up a hill, crossed it, pushed into the hollow beyond, and drove the foe finally and swiftly into his works. With the exception of a few sharpshooters he did not come out of them again.

But in crossing that last big hill a number from the 19th Ky. struck one of the gulches whose head was concealed by winding vines and fell to the bottom. Some were seriously hurt; it was reported that two or three had broken their necks. The great break in the side of the hill was just to my left as I passed over the light. I was not surprised as I looked at the vines that grew all about it that it could not be noticed at first, nor surprised that a fall like that so many feet to the bottom should be so disastrous.

That advance took us as near the foe as we could go without a direct charge upon the fortifications. It was now beyond 2 o'clock—in fact late in the afternoon. If there had been any charging elsewhere on time it had succeeded or failed before we could get in position. I mean the charge upon the main line of works. We had been charging, in fact, for two hours. I do not think our advance could have been more

rapid. Let me make the effort over such a rough country and bitterly exposed, and see how they would come out. No one, however, has suggested any failure here. All was done that could be done. By details and reliefs company after company and regiment after regiment got up as sharpshooters. One battery from our side tried to secure a position on the hill where we were stationed, but found it too exposed, and retired. But all day our field batteries had been doing excellent work.

The firing from the enemy's cannon had also been persistent. Even as we lay upon that hillside valley after valley came and the shells did not go five feet above us as we lay. They struck the bottom of the little vale and the foot of the opposite slope and



PICKS AND SHOVELS.

exploded. The rear from the big guns was practically continuous. If there was any delay it was only to give you time to notice that the sound had begun again.

THE HISS OF THE MINIÉ-BALL was more frequent. A rebel sharpshooter that dared to climb a tree at the upper end of our ravine did some sad execution, but he was soon located and at the answering shot of one of our men fell out of the tree like a dead squirrel. That spot was watched, and the serious business from that quarter came to an end.

Great numbers were wounded. The litters were going constantly. I never saw a place where there was such a stream of war's ruin flowing steadily downward. What sort of fountain was that at the top of the hill that set such a stream in motion? Here goes a man using his musket as a cane; he has been hit in the foot. Another is supported by two comrades; he is speaking excitedly, but full of fight. But his wound seems to be through the bowels and is probably mortal.

Here two are borne along who will fight the foe no more. Dead, poor fellows. The shells burst still, and see yonder solid shot as it bounces on the hill behind us! There goes a volley of grape right into the hole where the soldiers fell down the hill. It is a good thing they were removed before this. A few feet away the Colonel of our regiment lies, not unwilling to take a position like the rest of us. And wisely, too; for any other invites death. He has just spoken to a comrade, almost at his elbow, one of the regiment. Whip! comes a minié-ball. It strikes the arm of this comrade near the shoulder, crushes it, and just misses the heart. He joins the stream of those hurt as it flows downward and outward to the rear.

This was the picture we saw as the shadows deepened on that 19th of May. You could but add the same colors to it while we remained. Some were wounded where we lay on the hillside. It was not pleasant. After all, however, we began to get used to it.

As twilight came on, several made little fires—just large enough to place a pint cup with water for coffee on.

There were two great logs close together in the hollow. A soldier sat on one of these watching the cup of coffee of a comrade while he held his own in his hand and drank of it occasionally. We heard the sound of a minié, and whack it went against the tin cup on the fire. The coffee was spilt, and there was a laugh at the unlucky soldier. The man on the log still drank his coffee comfortably. Hark! There was the sound of another musket-ball, and this time it affected our friend on the log, hitting not his tin cup, but

CRASHING THROUGH HIS HEAD. Helplessly he fell over, and was carried away. By this time we thought it a good idea to put out the fires, and then darkness and silence in the main came upon the army.

As there was nothing more to do we tried to secure some sleep. Stephen M. and myself rolled the big logs apart and putting down my rebel blanket, we went to sleep with no covering of any kind. But we believed the logs would make pretty good breastworks.

The work which had been done by the other corps was not greatly dissimilar. Sherman, however, had come up to the rebel lines early enough on the 18th of May to get a position close to their front, before the full spirit of opposition had been received by the garrison. At least he found it easy to come so near the works that he could charge them with some prospect of success, as Grant had ordered. This duty devolved upon Blair's Division, which hitherto had done some of the marching but none of the fighting of the campaign. He moved forward on both sides of the road that led to the enemy's intrenchments, but found, as we all found, that the country was desperately hard to advance over in battle-line. The same ravines filled with timber, uncut or fallen, barred his way. But the 13th Regulars, under Col. Washington, planted their colors on the exterior slope. The Colonel was mortally wounded, and 77 out of 250 were either killed or wounded. The 83d Ind. and 127th Ill. carried the outer slope also of the works. They could, however,

GO NO FARTHER.

The troops retained their position till night, and then retired. Steele, on the extreme right, did not attack the main line, but secured some outworks of the enemy and captured a few prisoners. This was the attack of the Fifteenth Corps. McPherson was hindered (Seventeenth Corps) as we (the Thirteenth Corps) had been in advancing. Ransom's Brigade did make an attempt, however, upon the fortifications, but was not successful. The wish of Grant to carry the city at once by storm was thus not realized. But there was abundant reason for the incompleteness of the attack. Ground had been gained close upon the enemy. We knew now that he would fight. The nature of the ground was somewhat ascertained. Not as much could be said of this, however, as Bledau has made of it. In the charge of the 23d of May we attempted evolutions that could not have been performed by an army under the most favorable circumstances. And all this, too, on account of the nature of the ground, which it is supposed we learned so much of on this 19th of May. The morning of the 20th came at last.

Happy men were we. We were awakened by the whisper that our detail had come with breakfast, and sure enough those same baskets appeared in sight. And there at early dawn, under the guns of the enemy, we had a feast such as hungry men alone can know. It had been 21 hours since most of us had tasted food, and meanwhile had had the warmth of the Southern climate, the rush of the advance and the heat of battle to wear us out. But we had a good time while it lasted.

Shortly after daylight our command was called on to form its line in that little valley where all the day before had dropped the musket and cannon-balls.

The duel had begun again. It had not, happily for us, grown to its heaviest when we were aligned here. But I never knew a better commentary on that scripture verse, "Having done all, to stand," than this experience afforded. It was the hardest thing to do I ever tried—stand under fire and simply do nothing! I would rather have pushed over that hill on the charge a thousand times. Then I would be doing something. But to

"STAND STILL AND TAKE IT!"

it was trying enough. Presently we were ordered to right-face and move up to the head of this ravine and cross the high which lay between us and a great hollow farther to our right. We did so in column. As we passed over this upland we were in plain sight of two of the enemy's forts and a long line of rifle-pits. The range was easy. I thought it was altogether too easy. I wanted our column to hurry, at least till I got over. Finally we did strike the double-quick, and several companies reached the protecting hollow in safety. But the regiments that came later caught the storm of bullets. How wickedly that grape and canister sounded in that early morning! There were some from our brigade killed and others wounded. Some were wounded as they came down the hillside through the little grove of trees to the place of safety at the bottom. I watched their coming with interest, for my brother was in one of these regiments. He, however, escaped unhurt.

We had just taken another hill and a great hollow close to the enemy. It was in reality nearer the foe than our previous location, but it was in the main a safer place. We were so close that the artillery could not fire down upon us. And our sharpshooters were able to prevent their sharpshooters from doing us much injury. Yet the bullets kept whistling through the air above our heads.

The 20th and 21st of May were spent by the troops in sharpshooting. The commanders were getting ready for more aggressive work. McClernand had been directed to connect with Warrenton, and open up the line of communication from Milliken's Bend. The stores from Grand Gulf were also brought there, and the Thirteenth Corps was thus supplied by Milliken's Bend and Warrenton, while the Fifteenth and Seventeenth got their supply from Yazoo Landing. We obtained hardback once more, and the regular army ration began to appear. But no clothing came as yet. We



SURRENDER OF THE REBEL IRONCLAD TENNESSEE.

had been on the march since early in April. The dust and mire of the march had soiled us and tired us.

WE WERE GLAD TO REST, if rest this could be called; and we wanted clean clothes. The latter desire had still to go ungratified.

Meanwhile new roads were made toward Chickasaw Bayou, and for convenience in other places. Forage and ordnance stores were kept at hand in the steamboats at Yazoo River, and generally we were being supplied with the war material especially which we were supposed to need.

The troops that had been behind began to come up, Lauman's Division at Chickasaw Bayou and McArthur's at Warrenton. We were gathering our forces and our strength for the fierce onslaught of the 22d of May.

The work of sharpshooting we were beginning to learn. From the top of the hill we were in easy range of the enemy's forts and rifle-pits. If they got sight of us, they shot at us and killed us if they could. If we saw them, we shot at them, and if we didn't kill them it was our bad aim. There was, of course, some distance still to the rebel line, and there were hills and hollows in places yet between us. Anywhere that the rebel sharpshooter could get a shelter he would use it, and so would we. A tree, a fallen log, a mound of earth, a stump, in one place the roots of an upturned tree, afforded us the protection we desired. We got as close to the enemy as we could, and staid there till relieved. A few from the 33d Ill. had been killed in this duty. Co. A of that regiment discovered where their trouble came from—a band of sharpshooters to the right, where our own troops had not yet pushed up as close as we. A few of the company "flanked the flankers," however, and that little grove of trees was not occupied again.

On the night of May 21 I had my first experience in

DIGGING RIFLE-PITS.

I have wondered if this was not the first dug around Vicksburg.

We had to go, to begin with, for tools. Nobody seemed to know much where they were to be had. The detail marched three miles to the rear, reported to various officers, and at last secured some picks and shovels. Shouldering these, we were marched back the three miles to the top of a hill, to the right of where the regiment was stationed. Some of our soldiers were there on picket. The grass was nearly two feet high. The

(Continued on second page)

## THE U. S. S. BROOKLYN.

The Companion Vessel to Farragut's Flagship.

ASSAULT ON VICKSBURG.

Safe Passage of Part of Farragut's Ocean Fleet.

BATTLE OF MOBILE BAY.

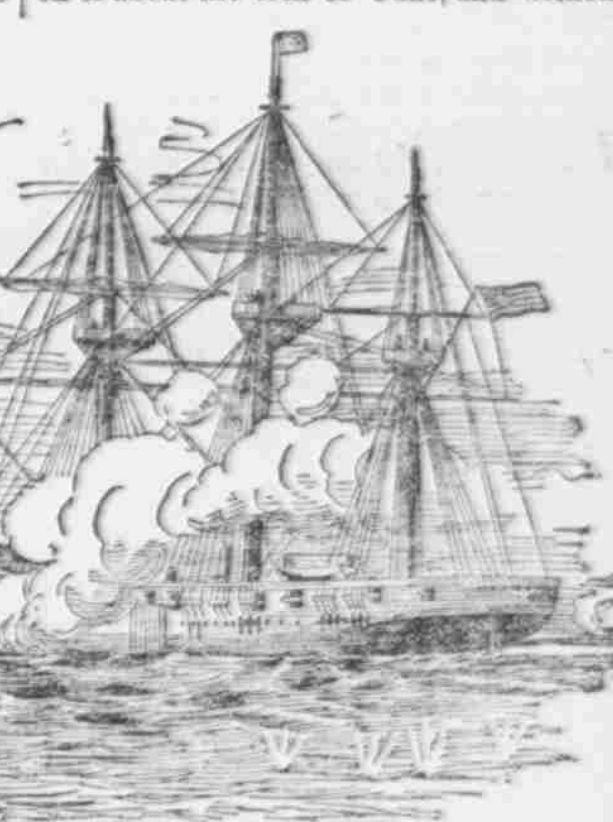
The Surrender of the Formidable Rebel Ram Tennessee.

BY WILLIAM SIMMONS, Past Commander National Association of Naval Veterans, Philadelphia, Pa.

II.

WITH the exception of the Pensacola and one or two other vessels the fleet ascended the river, "cleaning out" the enemy wherever he could be found, until reaching Vicksburg, the "Gibraltar of the West." Here the enemy had taken a stand, determined to dispute with the Yankee Jack-tars the right of way, and to

keep control, if possible, of the great waterway. The heights surrounding the city were in themselves natural defenses, but with guns mounted upon them they were almost unassailable. Nothing daunted, however, the brave Farragut determined on an attempt for the reduction of the formidable works that lay before him. He again called to his assistance the equally brave and determined Porter and his mortar fleet, which had gone to Pensacola, Fla., for repairs after the surrender of Forts Jackson and St. Philip. Commander Porter, learning of the wishes of his chief, immediately gathered his fleet together and sailed for Vicksburg, arriving on or about the 20th of June, and without



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